

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 11, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Mikulski and Ranking Member Shelby:

I am writing in opposition to a proposal in the Department of Commerce's fiscal year 2015 budget request to close the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Center for Coastal Fisheries and Habitat Research in Beaufort, North Carolina.

The NOAA Center for Coastal Fisheries and Habitat Research is the second oldest federal laboratory in the country. Encompassing programs for the National Estuarine Research Reserve, National Ocean Service, and National Marine Fisheries Service, this laboratory provides the only federal access to the most diverse marine ecosystem in the United States. Additionally, this lab employs approximately 100 people, including scientists who are consistently recognized both nationally and internationally for the high quality work they do to support research integral to sustaining fisheries and coastal ecosystems.

NOAA has provided very few details to support its decision to close this 100-year old laboratory, while insisting that it is a budgetary constraint because of maintenance costs. This is very troubling because NOAA's overall budget request does not present cost savings and significant infrastructure investments have been and are currently being made by the Federal Government and State of North Carolina to improve the facilities.

Also of note is the laboratory's membership in the North Carolina Marine Science and Education Partnership, which encourages collaboration with surrounding marine science research facilities, operated by North Carolina State University, Duke University, East Carolina University, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Additionally, its participation in the Marine Bio-Technologies Center of Innovation provides a great opportunity to foster economic growth. Closing this facility would degrade all of these efforts.

Finally, NOAA has not provided sufficient information about how they will address the impact of this closure on the surrounding communities as it relates to jobs, the economy, fishery support, and marine biology research.

This research facility is critical for research done around the world, and NOAA is being extremely shortsighted in their decision to propose closing it. It is for all of these reasons that I urge you to reject the President's request to close this laboratory.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Kay R. Hagan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "K" and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

Kay R. Hagan